1: Hocart Y-5 (ca. 1920) 1929 OQ6 Lau OQ6
Lakemba

THE LAUAN AS AN INDIVIDUAL

INFANCY

There is no word for baby in the Fijian language, only for a small child. The baby sleeps with its mother until eighteen months or two years old.

Women shape the child's head to be round (*vatu vinaka*) by placing a bit of cloth in their hands and pressing the head with it. This is usually done by the grandmother, who plays a large part in caring for the baby. Formerly ladies had nurses who fed the child and carried it about. They were paid by the father and received a share in any festival.

Most Fijian babies appear very helpless and apathetic. They are suckled until a late age, about eighteen months to two years. While some children are strong and grow fast, "the body hurries and disease seizes it." Fijian children sit alone at five months, crawl at six to seven months; at seven months they raise the knee; at eight, begin to stand up. Some toddle at eleven to twelve months, some much later. Their speech develops in proportion with their actions.

A Lauan baby is never crossed unless it is absolutely necessary; on the other hand, little is done to amuse it. The babies seldom laugh, or even smile.

CHILDHOOD

DISCIPLINE

Boys sleep with the mother until nine or ten years of age, when they sleep in the young men's quarters (*mbure*).

Children take to clothing by degrees and at their own discretion, especially the boys; the girls soon take to little gowns because they are not so easily thrown off. Boys even at the age of ten or eleven often discard their cloth when running, but gradually accept it as permanent apparel, though wearing it as short as possible, or as a loin cloth between the legs when running.

The hair of babies is closely cropped, that of older children is allowed to grow into many curious fashions—a mop on the top of the head, a coxcomb from forehead to poll. About the age of ten, many boys wear a broad tuft called *tombe* on the forehead, the remainder of the head being cropped close. At about the thirteenth or fourteenth year, the hair is allowed to grow uniformly, and becomes the object of increasing care. Little girls sometimes have their hair cropped except for a little tuft on the prominence on each side of the head.

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No control is exercised over children in the matter of food. Children eat at all hours, and as much as they like. When hungry they cry for food, sometimes up to the age of ten or more.

Parents are excessively indulgent to their children, and adults generally allow them liberties. For instance, small children are allowed to sit beside their parents in a concourse of adults and eat with them. I remember seeing only once a child beaten by its father. The idea that a child should be controlled seems wanting. A child that flies from its angry parents to some relative is not rejected. A Lauan said to me once, "We see white children how still they keep, and think they are to be pitied."

The people do not believe in educating children. Small children are said to be without minds (*tawa vakayalo*). Bigger children are watery souled (*yalo wai*). It is generally believed that it is useless to teach them anything, and that schools ought to be for big boys, almost young men. To the argument that the education of young children gives the best results in Europe, it is answered that Fijian children are quite different.

The education of Fijian children consists therefore in picking up things as they go along by example. The way in which they learn dances is characteristic: they do not join until about the sixteenth year, when they are left to muddle through. Their ignorance is therefore extraordinary and in marked contrast to the greater maturity of the children of the New Georgian group of the Solomon Islands, who, mixing freely in the conversation of their elders and sometimes conducting religious ceremonies in the absence of adults, are consequently early acquainted with many things.

The Lauan children pick up tales, but tell them most unintelligently. Much depends on the grandmother. Mosese was an exceptional boy in telling tales; the reason given for this was that he was "a boy with a grandmother" (*ngone vakatumbuna*). His grandmother, a lady, used to tell him tales heard from the nobles.

On the other hand, children pick up practical knowledge very early, because they begin to help their parents—boys, their fathers; girls, their mothers—at an early age, though at their own sweet will, more as a game at first. Gradually this develops into regular and real work till at the age of fifteen or sixteen they are enrolled among the adults as far as work is concerned. One energetic man boasted that he paid taxes at fifteen. Children thus very soon become experts on fishes and plants. When walking about, their chief interest is not the scenery but the food plants they descry. Food is indeed their chief interest, and they define everything in terms of food.

Crying is indulged in till a late age, but is more a sign of anger than of grief, especially vicious howling. Tui Tumbou thought Matuku boys

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593 tinues to play with her and with her personal property. His
854 mother's subordinate position to her husband and the adult
562 males in the household reinforces this behavior pattern, as does also the general status of women in the community. The mother continues to be lenient toward him unless she is in a bad mood, when she is likely to fly into a rage at a trifle.

855 One day while talking to Kama in my house at Tokalau,
603 we were interrupted by the screams of his three-year-old
593 granddaughter. Pursued by Lute, her mother, who carried a stick, the terrified child was running in the direction of my house. Lute, six months pregnant, was walking with a determined stride and gaining ground. Kama called to his granddaughter to come to him but not hearing him, she turned and ran around the next house. He left my house, and, calling the child by name, walked toward the pair who had now rounded the house and were again approaching. This time the child noticed him and ran to him. When Lute caught up with them Kama calmly and resolutely raised his hand and slapped Lute's face. She turned and walked away and he, comforting the child, brought her back with him to my house.

855 On another occasion I heard the screams of a child issuing from a neighboring kitchen house. A woman in a tantrum was whipping a child with a stick. She stopped until his screams abated, then whipped him again. This was repeated with morbid viciousness three or four times until a relative snatched the child away.

However, a child is not whipped often. If he takes forbidden property or fails to show respect where it is due he is scolded or slapped. If he is bubbling his lips the mother will
[863] remove his hand or slap him for it. He is not allowed to defecate in the house, but if he does so on the house platform or in front of the house, he is usually ignored. Gradually he learns to go to the beach or the bush. Infants sleep on baby mats, which are washed and sunned rather frequently. One

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informant said that children are occasionally burned on the arm or leg to develop resistance to pain. I was also told that a mask, consisting of a face painted on a coconut husk, is used to frighten little children. It is also used by clownish individuals to amuse the crowd at a large ceremonial exchange.

When in the company of adults, children are unobtrusive. Watching, listening, dozing, munching a piece of breadfruit, or entertaining themselves with a piece of string or imitation cigarette, they sit silently for hours on the lap of relative. The conversation of the adults is never modified on account of the children before whom life gradually unfolds.

In these early years the foundations of fear and respect are laid. Fear of the spirits, still today the strongest emotional complex of the natives, and of the Christian devil as taught by the native missionaries, takes deep root in the mind of the child. He hears adults talking of evil spirits they have seen, heard, and been possessed by; he is told stories of spirits and bad souls by his relatives and older children, and he hears and sees them himself. These stories have a strong permanent effect on his personality. Respect for his ancestral gods and the Christian God, closely related to and conflicting with fear of spirits, develops in the child during these years and blends with his growing sense of the importance of the elders of his clan and village.

The child becomes familiar with the behavior patterns of the group, and recognizes the status of each individual in relation to himself and to the other members of the community. He learns the social sanctions, backed as they are by fear of spirit ancestors, elders, and public opinion. He becomes dependent on public opinion, but he develops no defense against rebuke. Accustomed as he has been to the affection, cooperation, leniency, and encouragement—if not from all his relatives all the time, at least from some of his relatives all the time—he is unprepared for opposition, which he meets by subterfuge, sulkiness or tantrums. This lack of self-control is

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539 BROWN YOUTHS AND VIRGINS

Memu wai o nggori ka Kula;
Au solia mai loaloa;
Au solia na ndrau ni thevunga:
Memu wai o nggori ka Kula.

This is your broth, Sirs the Circumcised;
I give it from the wilderness;
I give the leaf of the *thevunga:*
This is your broth, Sirs the Circumcised.

Chant used when taking food to youths in isolation after circumcision.

858 Now comes a difficult period for the boy. From the age of
855 about seven until his initiation between eight and thirteen years, his life is uncomfortable. He is ignored, teased, tormented and overworked. He is called by the degrading, [578] humorous, obscene term *pilo* (pronounced pi'-lo), and a *pilo* he is in the eyes of the whole community.

A *pilo* is neither child nor man. He is no longer allowed to play in mixed gangs, and yet he is still excluded from all the interesting masculine activities of his father and older brothers —the preparation of food for the earth oven, sailing, house and canoe building, adult games, and love affairs. His growing masculinity brings about bars that separate him from girls of all ages. Women are inaccessible to him for they bestow their favors upon the initiated. The idea of an affair with a *pilo* is quite ridiculous to them. Yet he is not a man, and he is definitely separated from circumcised youths and older men. He is thwarted and he suffers from feelings of inferiority, becomes self conscious, awkward, silent, and retiring. His plight is highly amusing to the community, especially to the young women and swaggering initiated youths who amuse themselves by ridiculing and spurning him. The only emo- [838] tional outlet for boys of this age is in masturbation or homosexual relationships with other *pilos*. Such relationships are absent among men, according to both male and female informants.

858 But a *pilo* is useful. He is no longer a liability to the com-
857 munity, but has become its youngest asset. Chores he learned